

## Andrew Jackson to John Coffee, September 27, 1813, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

### TO JOHN COFFEE.

Nashville September 27 [?], 1813

*Sir:* Since the Issuing of your order of march and the confidential order, the letter from the Chocktaw linguister of which the inclosed is a copy has been recd., from which you will, discover that the whole Creeks are in motion. I have not confidence in this statement, nor do I believe the Creeks will abandon their country without a struggle, but still good policy, will dictate the propriety of giving it credence so far as to take a position, that if the information should turn out correct, that they may be interrupted on their march. you will therefore when you reach Huntsville, should you find the frontier of that part of the Territory sufficiently guarded make a movement, and take a position on the south bank of the Tennessee in the neighbourhood of the Colberts or bear creek,<sup>1</sup> the point left discretionary with you, and push your patroles in every

<sup>1</sup> George, Levi, and William Colbert were prominent Chickasaw chieftains and lived in northwestern Alabama, in what is now Colbert County. George Colbert had the ferry where the Natchez-Nashville road crossed the Tennessee River, near the lower end of Muscle Shoals. It was very profitable to him and he grew rich in lands, cattle, and money in bank. His ferry charges, says Warden ( *Account of the United States*, III. 15), were \$.50 for a man on foot and \$1.00 for a man mounted. He was said to have received a large sum in 1813 for ferriage of Jackson's expedition returning from Natchez. He also kept a tavern and Butterick, who stopped there in 1817 (see Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*, VIII. 73), said that Colbert, whom he miscalled "Tallbot," was much concerned lest his one daughter,

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who had many white suitors, should fall prey to a fortune-hunter. The three Colberts proved friends to the whites when the Creeks attacked the settlements in 1794. See *Am. State Papers, Indian Affairs*, I. 456, 539, 652 and 697.

direction, and employ the Chikesaws with som[e] confidential man of your detachment to obtain the true situation of the creeks, and their movements. This Position will give confidence to the chikesaws and choctaws and they will more freely give you any information they possess. let me remark that having confidence in your prudence and Judgment, you are left to deviate from this order, if in your Judgt the good of the service requires it. I send on James Russle, you will get some confidential person to go on with him into the creeek nation, to penetrate the same untill they can obtain certain information of the movements of the creeks and the positions they occupy. I shall send on Capt Strothart<sup>2</sup> through the cherokee nation with instructions to proceed untill he can get information whether the creeks are about to abandon their Towns, or not. I will send on Colo. John McKee to the chocktaw Towns, there to procure such information by runners from that Town as he can and communicate the same to you by express, which must be forwarded with dispatch to me. you will keep me well advised of the movements you make, and the information you receive of the situation and movement of the creeks. I shall reach Fayetteville on the evening of the 6th. or morning of the 7th. proximo and where you will adress me.

2 Probably Capt. John Strother.

Yrs. respectfully